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AN

ORATION

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STOUGHTON, MASS, JULY 5, 1830.

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 54TH ANNIVERSARY OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

BY

AMASA WALKER,

OF BOSTON.

BOSTON:

JOHN MARSH, AND WILLIAM SOUTHER.

1830.

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Published in compliance with the following resolution, adopted by the audience before whom it was delivered:

'*Resolved*, that the thanks of this meeting, be presented to Amasa Walker, Esq. of Boston, for his able and eloquent Oration, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for the press.'

BOSTON:
Waitt & Dow's Print., 122 Washington Street.

ORATION.

Fellow Citizens:—The return of this joyous anniversary, this natal day of our national existence, ever brings with it the most sublime and interesting associations.

At the dawning light of this glorious day, the heart of every American freeman thrills with emotions of joy, and his soul kindles into rapture as he contemplates the auspicious event which this day commemmorates.

Associated with the recollections of this hour, are all the glorious events of the American Revolution. The names and the deeds of our fathers, consecrate this hallowed day. 'Tis the holy sabbath of liberty; let its hours be sacred to the cause of freedom, and let the services and employments of this day ever correspond with the nature and design of its institution. Let our hearts and our voices rise in grateful ascriptions of praise to Him who nerved the arm of our fathers in the day of battle, to Him who preserved the ark of liberty, while fearfully tossed on the tempestuous ocean of revolution; to Him who gave wisdom to those who presided in council, and strength and victory to those who contended in combat. And let us on this occasion pay our heart-felt tribute of gratitude to those great and good men, by whose sacrifices and sufferings we enjoy the felicities of this day, and all the blessings of national liberty and in-

dependence; to those men, whose sterling virtue, whose undying love of freedom, ardent patriotism and indomitable hatred of tyranny, formed in this western hemisphere, an impassable barrier to the waves of oppression, and said to the angry surges of despotism, 'Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.'

Upon the trials and sufferings of these immortal men, it would be interesting to dwell, and trace their footsteps through all their severe and protracted struggles, to sympathize in their misfortunes and rejoice in their triumphs, to contemplate them bleeding on the field of battle, perishing through want and privation, in the cheerless camp; yet still preserving the sacred fire of liberty unsmothered in their breasts; to behold them under the most distressing vicissitudes, in the midst of the most sad and gloomy reverses, still with unfaltering step persevering towards the goal of liberty, to portray the glory of their final victory, when the proud armies of Britain surrendered to the prowess of their arms; to hear the rapturous and ecstatic peals of national rejoicing that ran with electric flight through the long harassed, but now emancipated colonies; I say, all this would form a pleasing and interesting theme for our contemplation; it is a theme, however grateful, that has often been dwelt upon, on occasions like this; but we have other and higher duties than merely to praise and admire the valor and the glory of our fathers. Recreant shall we be to their noble spirit, faithless to their injunctions and example, if we indulge in slothful inactivity, and content ourselves with praising, instead of emulating their noble deeds.

When we turn our eyes back upon the bright page of our country's history, and dwell with glowing enthusiasm on the deeds of noble daring which distinguished those who first bared their bosoms in the conflict for freedom, we are inclined to rejoice and glory in the deeds of our sires, forgetting perhaps the duties that devolve upon ourselves. 'Tis natural, 'tis becoming to rejoice in the triumphs of the past, and to wish that we could have participated in the acquisition of national independence; but let us not for once indulge the thought that nothing remains for us to accomplish in the emancipation of our country. No, fellow citizens; our land is not yet free. True, we have severed the chains of foreign servitude, and driven hostile armies from our shores; but the grim genius of tyranny still haunts our land, and stalks abroad in many a plausible and dangerous form.

The progress of science and the arts has changed the aspect and character of the civilized world, and tyranny has assumed a garb and character corresponding with the spirit of the age. The day has gone by when the sword alone was the potent engine of power; men have become too wise to be found engaged in murdering each other on the field of battle, for the sport and aggrandizement of their ambitious rulers; but the spirit of domination, and the lust of power, is not gone. No, it still exists, hideous and insatiable; it carries on its war against *equal rights* with as much relentless violence and unceasing perseverance as ever, only under different forms and with different weapons. Once, he who could command the most numerous and well disci-

plined military force, was the fairest candidate for power; now, he who can control and manage the most extended and best organized association, or combination of men, is the most certain of accomplishing his purposes.

Once he who could direct the bayonets of the people, was sure to reign; now, he who can most effectually influence or subsidize the public press.

The ground of battle and the implements of war are totally changed, and we must now look out for danger from different quarters.

Voluntary associations have become the great instruments of power in the 19th century; they move and direct the world, though often with an unseen and mysterious hand. Premising this declaration true, it follows that all combinations or associations of men, for whatever ostensible object, are just subjects of jealousy and suspicion. The immense power of voluntary associations, has been but recently discovered, and the astonishing facility with which they may be made to bear upon the public press, control public opinion, concert and effect the most gigantic plans and operations; is at once a matter of suprise and alarm. From this quarter, fellow citizens, are our rights and liberties threatened; and to withstand encroachments like these, are we called upon to wake up our energies, and put forth our exertions.

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not condemn the existence of associations for all good and useful purposes; they may be, and often are, productive of great good; but let us not forget that they are the great engines of power in the present age; let there-

fore the eye of scrutiny be directed upon every association or combination of men, whatever they may profess as the objects of their pursuit. Mark well their movements and their influence; for if good, they cannot and will not shun the public gaze; and if bad, the sooner they are exposed the better, and the safer, too, for the welfare of the community.

Among the various associations of the age, there is one which towers above all others; its top reaches to the clouds, and its branches spread over the whole land; its roots are entwined around every thing that is dear and valuable among men. This institution is FREEMASONRY, with 350,000 confederates, scattered through every section of our extended country; bound together by laws the most rigid and severe, known to each other by secret signs and tokens, its potent influence is felt from the centre, to the remotest extremities of our republic.

Freemasonry sits in the high seats of power, and walks through all the humble avenues of life. She presides at the altar of religion, in the hall of legislation, and on the bench of justice.

Such an accumulation of power and influence, could not, under any circumstances, be safe and beneficial; and believing, as we do, that the institution is dangerous in its very nature and principles, we shall enter upon an examination of its pretensions and character. We think we have a right so to do. We know not of any prerogative by which Freemasonry can claim exemption from that scrutiny, which is extended to every other institution, that does or ever has existed. In doing this, we shall speak freely; we hope honestly and candidly; and while we may

express ourselves in terms of disapprobation and reproach of the institution, we disclaim all personal hostility to its individual members; with them we have no quarrel; towards them we indulge no feelings of unkindness; many of them are our friends, and we hope will still remain such. The institution, a sense of duty compels us to assault, but the *private characters* of its members are to us *inviolable*.

In the first place, Freemasonry is a gross imposture. It pretends to the most remote antiquity, modestly numbering among its patrons all the renowned heroes, sages, and kings of ancient time, not forgetting the wise monarch of Israel, and the disciple whom Jesus loved. This pretension, every man at all acquainted with history, knows to be totally false, and is a disgraceful imputation on those great and worthy men, who have been so kindly enfolded in masonic embrace. I am aware that since the imposture has been exposed, the fraternity seem disposed to give up this claim; but let us look back upon the declarations of those that have lauded masonry for the last fifty years, and we shall find that this has been the *burden of their boasting*. They cannot now relinquish it, without implicit acknowledgment of most impudent forgery and imposture.

Masonry claims to be a school of science. This pretension has long been considered a prepostuous one, and all seceders now declare, that there is not even the semblance of science connected with the 'labors or refreshments of the lodge.' It is indeed a school, not of wisdom but of folly; a school where the simple are taught too late that they have been duped in their search after good.

Masonry claims to be the 'handmaid of religion.' Not content with insulting the intelligence of mankind by its pretensions of antiquity and science, she arrogantly aspires, with heaven daring impiety, to be the favored handmaid of the meek and holy religion of Jesus Christ. This arrogant claim rests on the same foundation as the preceding, and is equally entitled to our regard; but of the truth of this declaration we shall be able to judge, when we consider the revolting and impious ceremonies of masonry, especially in the high degrees. These, fellow citizens, exceed all belief. It would seem as if human and even infernal ingenuity had exhausted invention in prostituting the holy scriptures, and the titles and attributes of Jehovah, to the farcical and disgusting mummery of the lodge. This language may seem strong, but I solemnly declare that all language is inadequate to convey the awful reality. My blood chilled with horror, when on a recent occasion I witnessed in Boston an exhibition of the Royal Arch and Knights Templars degrees!

I saw the most ridiculous and vulgar farce intermixed with frequent readings of the most solemn passages of holy writ, with continual allusions to the most striking events of scripture history, and mock representations of the *burning bush*, and the resurrection of the blessed Saviour!

But the great and most imposing claim of masonry remains to be considered. 'Charity is the great end and design of the association.' This is its strong hold, its tower of strength, its last citadel. It is this which has preserved its existence, by giving it currency and popularity among men. This has been

the unvarying theme of panegyric, and been echoed and re-echoed by all who, on any occasion have sung the high praises of masonry.

This pretension is false; this claim cannot be sustained by facts. True, it will not be denied that deeds of benevolence have been performed by the fraternity; but it is denied that charity forms any considerable part of its appropriations. Not a tithe, nay, probably not a hundredth part of its funds are, or ever have been devoted to charity, and expended in relieving the necessities of its own members, to whom it is exclusively confined.

This statement is substantiated by the declaration of members of the fraternity, and can be proved by an appeal to the most numerous and best authenticated facts. The time allotted to this occasion forbids that we should enumerate them, and I will mention only two, and those probably familiar to most of you. From an examination of the official records of a highly respectable lodge in the city of Boston, it was ascertained that the whole sum expended in charity for 18 years, from its funds, was only 35 dollars! This fact is not more striking than one which is disclosed by the records of the Royal Arch Chapter of Massachusetts, from which we ascertain that in the year 1824, 'the sum of *Sixty Dollars* was voted to be expended in charitable purposes for the ensuing year!' This, let it be remembered, was the yearly charity of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of this State, which retains under its jurisdiction 14 subordinate chapters, from all which it receives tribute. This is the truly *princely sum*, to distribute which, requires the aid of all the Grand officers and

high dignitaries of Royal Arch Masonry in Massachusetts!

After stating facts like these, we hope we shall not be deemed '*uncharitable*' when we assert that all the parade and boasting of charity is a mere pretence, a cloak to hide the real character and designs of the institution, and that it is as great a hoax on public credulity, as the declaration that 'King Solomon was a Master Mason,' and 'the masonic lodge room the best school of mathematics.'

Of what use, would we ask, are the titles and trappings of royalty, in dispensing charity, and what are the peculiar and appropriate duties of Kings and High Priests in relieving the necessitous? And we should like well to be informed of the utility of a body of armed Knights, of which we are told there are about 1000 in the single encampment of Massachusetts and Rhode Island? This chivalrous band, each of whom is armed with a sword and dirk, must surely perform prodigies of valour, in *distributing charity*, enforcing their benevolent deeds at the point of the dagger!

In passing to an examination of some of the *characteristics* of masonry, we find that its government consists of a code of laws, in other words, of a system of oaths, the most barbarous in their requisitions, the most inhuman and bloody in their penalties, that human depravity ever devised, or savage ferocity ever inflicted. So abominable are these oaths, so revolting are their penalties, that civilized men could not be made to believe that such did exist, until they had the testimony of hundreds to the fact, nor until satisfactory evidence was obtained, that at least one

of their fellow citizens had suffered their awful penalties.

To exhibit the character and necessary influence of these oaths, we will adduce some short quotations, the correctness of which we challenge masons themselves to deny.

Every man who has ever knelt at the masonic altar, has sworn, amongst other things, in the entered apprentice's degree, 'that he will always hail, ever conceal and never reveal any of the secrets and mysteries of Freemasonry, binding himself under no less penalty, than to have his throat cut across, his tongue torn out by the roots, and his body buried in the rough sands of the sea, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours.'

Every Master Mason swears, 'that a Master Mason's secrets, given to me in charge as such, and I knowing them to be such, shall remain as inviolable in my breast as in his own, murder and treason excepted, and they left to my own election, binding myself under no less penalty than to have my body severed in two in the midst, and divided to the north and south, and my bowels burnt to ashes in the centre.'

Every Royal Arch Mason has among other things sworn 'that he will aid and assist a companion royal arch mason when he sees him engaged in any difficulty, and espouse his cause so far as to extricate him from the same, whether he be right or wrong. Also that he will promote a companion royal arch mason's political preferment, in preference to any other person of equal qualification. That he will keep a companion royal arch mason's secrets, murder

and treason not excepted, binding himself under no less penalty than to have his skull smote off, and his brains exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, if he ever wilfully violates or transgresses any part of this his solemn oath.'

Every Knight Templar after receiving the oath of that degree, utters the following shocking imprecation. Taking a cup formed of the upper part of the human skull filled with wine, he says, 'as the sins of the world were laid upon the head of the Saviour, so may all the sins of the person whose skull this was, be heaped upon my head in addition to my own, should I ever wilfully or knowingly transgress any obligations that I have heretofore taken, now take, or shall at any furture time take, in relation to any degree of masonry or order of Knighthood.'

Every Thrice Illustrious Knight of the Cross swears that 'should he know another violate any essential part of this obligation, that he will use his most decided endeavors, *by the blessing of God!* to bring him to the strictest and most condign punishment, and this, by pointing him out to the world as an unworthy and vicious vagabond, by opposing his interest, by deranging his business, by transfering his character after him wherever he may go, and by exposing him to the contempt of the fraternity and the world, but of this Illustrious Order more especially!'

I will just remark here, that the candidate, before receiving these obligations, is gravely assured there is nothing in them that will interfere with his religion or politics; but what a man's religion or politics must be, to consist with the keeping such oaths, I leave for you to judge.

I might pursue this shocking detail through all the variety afforded by 48 degrees of masonry; but enough has been exhibited to satisfy, I trust, every candid mind, that an institution founded on such barbarous laws, sustained and defended by such principles, cannot but be fraught with evil, and be a just object of suspicion and dread.

Though only a part, enough has been told to convince you, my fellow citizens, that its oaths war against every principle of free government, and are totally subversive of the doctrine of the *equal rights* of man. Masonry is indeed a moral and political phenomenon. It is, we trust, unique, and for the honor of human nature, we will be slow to believe that the world, in its most barbarous and degraded age, ever produced a counterpart.

In tyranny, it vies with the Inquisition, claiming and exercising, even in this boasted land of freedom, the *same prerogatives* which render that infamous ecclesiastical tribunal the scourge and curse of miserable Spain.

Yes, fellow citizens, we repeat it, and we desire that it may be remembered, that free masonry claims the *right* to punish offenders against her laws, and holds the lives, liberty, and property of her members, at her arbitrary disposal. Is it not so? Do we need evidence on this point? Then let the blood of Morgan speak! Do we need 'more light' on this subject? Let that light be reflected from the midnight fires of Miller's printing office, kindled by the hands of masonic incendiaries. These wanton acts, let it be remembered, were not the deeds of an infuriated mob, or a desperate banditti; they were the deliber-

ate and authorized acts of the masonic institution, in the State of New-York, and hundreds were concerned in maturing and executing these awful enormities. These things were not done to satiate individual revenge, but to maintain masonic law, and inflict its penalties.

It is well known that the men who were the immediate agents in the masonic executions, acted under the authority of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of the State of New-York, and that they have hitherto been protected and defended, so far as masonic power and influence could do it. They have been, and still are, treated as sufferers in the holy cause of masonry, and worthy the assistance and sympathy of all the Brotherhood.

But the right and power to punish with death the violaters of its laws, is not the most terrific feature of this institution. No; there is a power more dreadful, because more dangerous to liberty, than even this. That power is the control which masonry has acquired, and still exerts, over the public press; a control by which she can overawe and silence all investigation and scrutiny, and by which she can and does load with infamy and reproach, all who renounce her obligations, or expose her enormities.

I need not dwell upon this fact, nor upon the alarming consequences it involves.

Another very important consideration connected with this subject, is the influence which masonry exerts in our courts of justice. The fact that a certain combination of men exists in the midst of us, who are under the most solemn oath to 'espouse the cause of a brother, when engaged in any difficulty, so far

as to extricate him from the same, whether he be right or wrong,' is one, as we conceive, in which every man in the community has a deep interest. That such is the oath of a R. A. Mason, we well know, and its influence in the administration of justice can be readily conceived. I know it is stoutly denied that masonry does exert any influence in our courts of law ; and so was the murder of Morgan denied as long as that manœuvre could gain any credence; but that this influence has often been powerfully felt, is a fact as well established as the principle of gravitation, and will be as conspicuous in the future history of our country, as the treason of Aaron Burr.

A true account of the masonic trials that have been, and still are going forward in the State of New York, *will* furnish occasion for the utmost astonishment to the people of these States, when the press shall be so far emancipated that the *plain truth* can be told. I venture to affirm that the whole course of judicature in this country, from its early settlement to the present day, does not exhibit so much perjury and corruption, violence and contempt of law, as has been witnessed in the State of New York, in regard to the trials of the abductors and murderers of William Morgan.

The collision of masonic oaths, with those requisite for the administration of justice, is a matter in which every citizen, however humble, has a deep interest; and this must be so apparent to all, that I will not use an argument to sustain the position, although the most powerful might be adduced. If, however, there are any who doubt this, I will submit one

single question, upon the decision of which I am content to rest the cause.

Where is the man who having a controversy with a royal arch mason, would be willing to submit a cause that involved his fortune or his character to a jury, *any part* of whom were previously sworn 'to aid and assist a companion royal arch mason, when engaged in any difficulty, and espouse his cause so far as to extricate him from the same, whether RIGHT OR WRONG?'

I ask where is the individual who would willingly submit his cause to *such* a jury? And yet such juries are found in all our courts. Where is the man who is uninterested in this fact? Who is safe and secure in his rights, while our courts of justice are polluted with extrajudicial oaths of such pernicious character?

Let every one bring this home to his own breast, and in the calm moments of sober reflection, decide whether masonry is not an evil, and whether anti-masons are to be branded with infamy, for attempting to destroy *such an institution.*

The accumulated considerations we have named, and many others that might be adduced, render the masonic association an object of our apprehension and dread, and inspire our breasts with an unalterable determination to oppose its sway, and subvert its power. We enter on this great moral conflict in full view of its arduous and protracted character, and under a strong apprehension of the trials and sufferings it involves; we do it with a deep feeling of our duty to God and our fellow men, and with undoubting faith in the final triumph of our cause.

We are often told in the mixed language of menace and ridicule, 'You have undertaken a hard job. You are attempting to accomplish that which all the despots of Christendom have essayed in vain.' We know it; we feel it; 'tis all true. But we know too, that 'the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.' We remember too, the example of our fathers, who though poor and scattered, unarmed and defenceless, dared to hurl defiance at the court of St James, and contend single handed with the armed legions of Britain.

For our encouragement in this arduous undertaking, let us for a moment turn our eyes to the history of the early days of the American Revolution. From 1770 to 1775, the great work of enlightening the public mind, in relation to the encroachments of the British government, was going forward in America. And how was this accomplished? Brave and daring spirits, who saw and felt their country's wrongs, determined to awake their fellow citizens to a just sense of their alarming situation.

For this purpose they called assemblies of the people, and at the risk of all that man holds dear, raised their voices against the tyranny of the mother country, and conjured their fellow citizens to stand up in defence of their rights and liberties. By the most impassioned harangues, they endeavored to communicate to the whole body of the people, the fire of patriotism that burned in their own breasts. They resorted to the public press, and labored to diffuse throughout the colonies a just sense of the wrongs and oppressions of the British ministry. Happily for our country, these efforts succeeded.

But what was said of the men who were thus active in these transactions? Let the history of those days speak out, and it will tell you that Hancock and Adams, and Warren and Quincy, and Gerry, were branded with every ignominious and opprobrious epithet. It will tell you that these men were called 'factious demagogues,' 'political incendiaries,' 'ambitious aspirants,' 'the disturbers of the public peace,' 'the enemies of their country.' It was said by the minions of power in those days, that these aspiring men only desired to kindle a *mad excitement*, make dupes of the people, thrust themselves into notice, 'and ride upon the whirlwind and direct the storm.' It was said that 'the people as a mass were quiet and contented in the peaceful pursuit of profitable occupations, and but for these inflammatory measures, might still continue in the unmolested enjoyment of their rights.'

The public presses in many parts of the country, were under royal influence, and dealt out anathemas against the 'seditious demagogues,' who were exciting the multitude, and sung many a mournful dirge upon the hypocrisy and depravity of those men who cried aloud against the oppressors of their country. It was by such means that the friends of Britain hoped to allay public excitement, and keep the people quiet. These efforts were powerful, and came nearer being successful than any other attempts that were made to subdue the spirit of liberty in America. Read the accounts of those days, and you will find that the Whigs entertained their strongest fears from this quarter. They feared that the syren song of peace would lull their countrymen into a fatal slum-

ber. Their great anxiety was to enlighten their fellow citizens, and make them *feel* their danger; and when this was accomplished, the broad foundation for effectual resistance was laid, upon which the glorious superstructure of American independence rose into being.

Our fathers, it is well known, had to contend not only with the fleets and armies of England, but with internal foes. The TORIES *of those days* were great lovers of peace and quiet; great enemies to 'excitement' and rebellion; entertained strong aversion to 'civil commotion;' and the 'inflammatory proceedings' of the 'unprincipled' Whigs, met with their severest reprehension. They loved the King, and could '*see no harm*' in the aggressions of the British government. They thought and said that the popular clamor and dissatisfaction were without sufficient cause, and wholly unjustifiable. I need not further describe what the Tories were; their names and their deeds are enrolled on the black record of shame, and I have alluded to them only to offer a remark, that there is at this time a class of men who sustain precisely the same relation to the present struggle, that the Tories did to the Revolution.

Yes, fellow citizens, there are men who are loud in their praise of the 'noble institution,' although they have never been initiated into its sublime mysteries. They are exceedingly exasperated with those who oppose it. These men (though for the honor of our country we hope a small class) are very annoying to the friends of liberty, and greatly serviceable to their *Royal* Masters. They make loud professions of 'candor,' and 'neutrality;' but the most

distinguishing trait in their character is a blind, stupid, obstinate adherence to the interests of their favorite institution. We do not grudge these men the reward they will receive for their disinterested services; we envy them not the place they will occupy, when the future historian shall narrate the occurrences of the present day. Their fame will be equally honorable with that of those who first opposed the progress of liberty in America.

The present struggle to obtain deliverance from masonic domination, presents the same characteristics as that to which I have adverted. The encroachments of this gigantic combination had become so flagrant, extending not only to the property, but even the lives and liberties of our citizens, that they could no longer be borne.

With astonishing presumption it trampled on all human law, and set at defiance the highest authority of our country. Swelled with pride at the wealth and dignity of the institution, its members vainly thought that *masonry* could do what it pleased, and the people must bow in submission to a power they could neither evade nor withstand; but, thanks to that kind and merciful Providence that preserved our country in its earliest days of peril, thanks to those brave men who first dared to stand out on the side of truth and liberty, a glorious, and we trust successful revolution is begun. True, the first *Martyr* has sealed his patriotism with his blood, and gone with Warren and Montgomery to enjoy the smiles of his God and the eternal gratitude of his country; but other and kindred spirits have arisen, who, with devoted heroism and undaunted zeal, have determined

to free their country from its chains, or perish in the attempt. The electric spark struck out by the martyr of Batavia, has kindled a mighty flame, whose light already gilds the top of every mountain, and ilumines every valley in our land. The explosion at Niagara, that first came to our ears on the western zephyr, with faint and uncertain sound, has swelled to a note of thunder, and reverberates, with terrific intonations, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. The groans of the oppressed, and the sighing of the prisoner have been heard, and men worthy to sustain the cause have stepped forward in defence of injured innocence and suffering virtue.

But what reception have these men met with? Let the pages of a servile press disclose the answer, and it will tell you, that, like the early movers of the American Revolution, they have been assailed by all the vindictive calumny, and loaded with all the contempt and reproach, that malignity could inflict. Like them, they have been branded as 'unprincipled and seditious riot breeders.'

The object is the same now that it was then; it is designed to make the people distrust the characters and motives of those men who *dare* to act in this cause; 'tis designed to lull the people into false security till their chains are made fast forever.

Our fathers, let it be remembered, took up arms not so much on account of what they *suffered*, as what they *feared*. It was but a small affair to pay an impost of three-pence per pound on tea; but this small exaction involved a principle of tyranny, and was, as they well believed, but a prelude to more odious impositions. So, fellow citizens, it is with us.

It is but comparatively a small thing, that kidnapping, arson and murder, in one instance have been committed, but the principles which these transactions involve, and the power that has thus been exerted, appear to us of the pernicious and terrific character.

I am aware that this latter idea will be scouted at, and the question will come, 'are masons the enemy you dread?' 'And are they not your friends?' 'Your greatest and your best men?' So said the friends of royalty to the discontented whigs, before the revolution. 'Your wrongs are imaginary, you exaggerate your sufferings; the king is your father; the British ministry are your friends.' But the whigs of those days understood their rights, and their *duty*, too, and acted accordingly, unawed by threats, unseduced by flattery.

But if, fellow citizens, there was cause for excitement then, is there not still more abundant reason now? When, I ask, did the aggressions of England ever equal those practised by masonry? When did her monarch *ever dare* to seize an American citizen, and tear him from his home and his country, and even deprive him of life, without a trial by jury, or any of the forms of law?

Never, never did George 3d, though clad in kingly power, perpetrate a deed like this. The genius and spirit of the British constitution forbade such flagrant iniquity!

But masonry has done *all this*, and done it in the exercise of what she claims as her power and right; she laughs in derision at the men who presume to question her authority, and levels the red hot thun-

derbolts of her unmingled wrath, at those who dare oppose her power.

Will the freemen of this republic supinely suffer all this? Your indignant frown, fellow citizens, answers, no. The insulted shades of those illustrious men, who fought and bled in the holy cause of liberty, answer no. What then shall be done? If masonry in its principles and practice be what we represent, it must and ought to be subverted. It then becomes a matter of interesting inquiry, how shall it be accomplished? We answer in the first place, by exposing its unhallowed secrets, and its wicked oaths; by stripping off the dark mantle of concealment, and exhibiting its hideous deformity to public gaze; in a word, by showing masonry as it is, and not as it pretends to be. But how shall these objects be effected? Evidently the most natural and effectual mode would be, to enlighten the public mind through the medium of the public press. But we have before said that this resource is almost universally denied to us. A fair discussion of this important question cannot be had. Masonry will not permit it; then in what manner can it be done? It must be done, fellow citizens, in the same way in which the good people of these States have always redressed their wrongs, ever since they became an independent nation; by the same power which has from time to time checked the encroachments of aristocracy on one hand, and anarchy on the other.

This evil must be cured by that excellent panacea which a virtuous people can ever administer with a skilful hand, to those whose heads have grown giddy with the high elevation of power.

In short, it must be done by the strongest and most unequivocal expressive public sentiment at the Ballot Box. This only will tell on the cause; this only will show that the people are fixed in their determination to break the power of masonry. I am aware that this course seems highly objectionable to many. I am sure it did so to me. I have publicly deprecated this resort, but experience has fully convinced me that *there is no other*. I did hope that by a fair examination of the question in the journals of the day, public sentiment would be correctly formed, the evils averted, and the institution overthrown, without resort to the direct suffrages of the people. This hope was fallacious.

Shall it be said that this question is not one of sufficient importance to assume a political character, and divide the country into two great parties? This cannot be asserted by any one who knows *what* masonry is, and understands its bearings and influence on society. Notwithstanding the constant declarations of the fraternity to the contrary, the institution is strictly a *political one;* it has no other real object of any importance, and but for this feature in its character, would not hold together for an hour.

True, it is not devoted to the interest of any particular party; still, it affords the desired facilities to all political aspirants, of whatever party, to forward their views and advance their interests. The whole structure of the institution bespeaks this, and one of its most distinguished members has declared, 'that it is peculiarly adapted to political intrigue.'

The late De Witt Clinton, whose masonic ortho-

doxy none will dispute, says in one of his public addresses, 'masonry has politics of her own.'

But we have evidence that goes farther on this point than mere assertion or conjecture; and that is, the undisputed fact, that a vast proportion of all the offices of honor, trust and profit in the United States, are held by the worthy and well qualified brotherhood. It has been ascertained, in some parts of our country, where inquiry has been instituted, that the members of the fraternity hold ten times as many offices, as they are entitled to in proportion to their numbers! This we cannot suppose the result of accident. Neither shall we be willing to admit, that the Knights of the Lambskin enjoy such a monopoly of talents and qualifications, as to entitle them to so disproportionate a share of power and influence. It can be accounted for, we believe, only on the well known masonic principle,* 'to promote a brother's political advancement, in preference to any other of

*The following (selected from a large mass of evidence) in proof of the above position, is taken from the Columbian Centinel of March 30, 1816, edited by Benjamin Russell, Esq. then Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.

'To the masonic fraternity. *Brethren*—It need not be repeated that the Internal Regulations of your benevolent Order exclude all *discussions* of political dogmas. But every *Master* knows, that his *public obligation* compels him to discharge the duties he owes to the State with diligence and fidelity.

When two candidates, therefore, present themselves for his suffrage, he is not bound to inquire to what *party* the one or the other belongs; but whether he is '*a good man and true*,' and faithful to the Constitution which he may be called upon to administer. And, all other things being favorable, he is bound by every *Masonic Obligation* to give his vote for the one who is a Free and Accepted Brother, in preference to the one who is not. Brother John Brooks, shall receive the vote of

A Master Mason.'

equal qualifications.' If this be true, and we challenge a refutation, does it not exhibit the political character of masonry? Does it not incontestibly prove that those who are not of the fraternity, do not enjoy *equal rights* and privileges? It is nothing more or less than a partial disfranchisement, and not the less odious because effected by stealth and secrecy.

If motives drawn from considerations like these, do not justify a constitutional exercise of elective franchise, then we mistake our duty. If these evils are not of a political as well as moral character, we do not judge aright. The citizens of Norfolk county, many of whom I have now the honor to address, have decided upon the expediency and propriety of such a course. To you, fellow citizens, I will not use an argument on this subject. You have by voluntary and simultaneous efforts, arisen in your strength, and banished masonry from *your* delegation to the Senate of the Commonwealth. You have virtually declared that you will not sustain men who hold 'allegiance' to any other power than the government of your country, or who are under oath to 'prefer' any other interests than those of the whole community.

You have set a noble and generous example, and enjoy the distinguished honor of first breaking the chains of masonry in Massachusetts; of being pioneers in the glorious cause of civil emancipation from masonic vassalage. Persevere, fellow citizens, in this great and arduous work; your example will be emulated in every section of our commonwealth, and other States are already far advanced in the important

work of acquiring their freedom. Union is strength. This the great fraternity have long konwn. For the attainment of the great object of your pursuit, you must stand united. Merge all your differences on political and religious subjects, and let all minor considerations be sacrificed on the altar of public good. Let nothing be allowed to break your ranks; but with firm and unbroken front, march forward in the cause. Your opponents are organized, and disciplined, old and veteran troops; well officered, well armed, and well paid. On this account they have greatly the advantage; but let your zeal and devotion supply the place of organization, and your fidelity to the cause stand you instead of discipline and arms; and although you neither ask nor expect any quarter, be always ready to give it to those who break from their allegiance to masonry; give it freely and cheerfully; and since you are not under oath 'to traduce any man's character,' or 'derange any man's business,' let no acts of wanton malice ever tarnish the glory of your victories.

The great revolution that hos been begun, must and will go forward. It has hitherto progressed with regular and rapid strides. It is extending from town to town, county to county, state to state. 'Revolutions never go backward,' especially when liberty contends with oppression.

The spirit of anti-masonry can never die; 'tis the spirit of liberty. It is *not* a local and temporary faction, but a universal and abiding principle. The coal that kindled the fire of anti-masonry, is the same that burned on the altar of freedom in '75. It has not been, I trust in God it never will be extinguished in

this happy land. We have no fears from the devastations of these holy fires; they can only consume the loathsome relics of barbarism and oppression; over all the fair works of liberty they have no consuming power.

Peculiar and arduous are the duties that devolve on those of you, my fellow citizens, who have engaged in the cause of ANTI-MASONRY. You have enlisted in a service from which you cannot be discharged till the great object of your labors is accomplished. You must suffer much in the trials and conflicts through which you will pass, and, I trust, enjoy much in the victories you will achieve. You need great wisdom, fortitude and perseverance; the spirit of inflexible determination and unalterable resolution, combined with moderation and forbearance. While you set your faces as a flint against the abominations of masonry, endeavor to preserve a candid, temperate and charitable deportment towards the members of the craft. Bear strongly on your minds that it is masonry, and not masons, with whom you war. Remember that many of the fraternity are more the objects of your compassion than censure. They have been cruelly duped, and but from a false sense of shame, and mistaken sense of duty, would renounce its obligations, and denounce its impostures. Many, too, are dreadfully trammelled in their minds, with the sad belief that the impious oaths they have taken are binding. They seem to forget that oaths which require a man to violate the laws of God and his country, cannot be obligatory. How can a man, I ask, be bound by masonic oaths, to keep secrets which the good of community requires should be di-

vulged? Reason and common sense forbid us to suppose that these oaths can have any binding force, not only because they are illegally administered, but because they are immoral and improper in their requisitions.

In relation to oaths of such a character, Shakspeare said, long before masonry had existence:

> 'It is a great sin to swear unto a sin,
> But greater sin to keep a sinful oath.
> Who can be bound, by any solemn vow,
> To do a murderous deed? to rob a man?
> To 'reave the orphan of his patrimony?
> To wring the widow from her customed right?
> And have no other reason for his wrong,
> But that he was bound by a solemn oath.'

Fortunately for our country, there have been found some brave and honest men, who have dared to renounce these 'sinful' oaths, and stand forth on the side of truth and liberty. Rally round these men; stand firm in their defence; let nothing shake your fidelity to them. They have, with a disinterested heroism, thrown themselves into *your* arms, and their fortunes and characters into the scale with the liberties of their country. They deserve and will receive the approbation of every good man, in this and all coming time; but let us remember at what fearful risks they have performed these noble deeds; let us duly appreciate their generous sacrifices, and let our unwavering attachment and unceasing gratitude be commensurate with their invaluable services in the blessed cause.

Let the names of Colden and Sumner, of Ward and Thacher, of Sewell and Merrick, be ever dear

to your hearts, and let their spotless and exalted characters ever find in your affections, a safe asylum from the vindictive and malignant persecutions of wicked men.

Your cause, fellow citizens, is now unalterably committed. You have aroused the angry spirit of a mighty foe, and can never retreat from the conflict you have commenced. Go on, then, in the path of duty. You are impelled by every motive that can move the hearts of high-minded and honorable men. I conjure you, by the fidelity you owe to yourselves and posterity, by your love and regard for the interests of our common country, by the deeds of glory that emblazon the fair escutcheon of your country's fame,—stop not in your career of conflict, till victory shall have crowned your efforts, till the terrific power of masonry shall be forever broken, till the last pillar of her *Temple* shall have fallen to the ground, and the mighty fabric lie in undistinguished ruin.